

# Jeremiah 41 - Insurrection Against Gedaliah

V. Present calamity of Judah (Jer 34:1–45:5)

(3) After the fall (Jer 40:1–45:5)

(A) Jeremiah's Ministry to those that remained in the land (Jer 40:1–42:22)

(b) Gedaliah governorship (40:7–41:10)

(ii) Assassination (40:13–41:10)

(b) Assassination (41:1-3)

(c) Ongoing abuses (41:4-10)

(c) Johanan's leadership (41:11–42:22)

(i) Captives liberated (41:11-18)

## Jeremiah 41

(b) Assassination (41:1-3)

1 Now in the seventh month Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, the son of Elishama, **of the royal family** and **one of the chief officers of the king, along with ten men**, came to Mizpah to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. While they were eating bread together there in Mizpah,

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1 In the seventh month, Nethaniah's son Ishmael, the grandson of Elishama, a member of the royal family and one of the chief officers of the king, came to Ahikam's son Gedaliah at Mizpah, along with ten men. While they were dining together there at Mizpah,

1 Now it came to pass in the seventh month, *that* Ishmael the son of Nethaniah the son of Elishama, of the seed royal, and the princes of the king, even ten men with him, came unto Gedaliah the son of Ahikam to Mizpah; and there they did eat bread together in Mizpah.

- "...of the royal family" - if you knew that early, you would say that is part of the dynamics going on here.

- "...along with ten men" - you will be amazed at what these 11 guys pull off. These guys are roughnecks.

- This is a scene sort of analogous to the scene in the upper room. Gedaliah is there, and a group of people that included these eleven guys, and they are eating bread together. There is a tone here of trust, candor and fellowship, but his own familiar friend in whom he trusted

lifts up his heel against him (Ps 41:9). It is applied to the Messiah but there is an analogy here.

2 Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him rose up, and struck and killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword and put to death the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

2 Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the ten men who were with him arose and struck down Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, the son of Shaphan, with the sword and put to death the one whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

2 Nethaniah's son Ishmael and the ten men with him got up and killed Ahikam's son Gedaliah, the grandson of Shaphan, with swords and killed the man whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

2 Then arose Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and the ten men that were with him, and smote Gedaliah the son of Ahikam the son of Shaphan with the sword, and slew him, whom the king of Babylon had made governor over the land.

- It is just a brutal, bloody scene where Ishmael and his ten rise up and slaughter Gedaliah. He was forewarned.

3 Ishmael also struck and killed all the Jews who were with him, *that is* with Gedaliah in Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.

3 Ishmael also struck down all the Jews who were with him, *that is* with Gedaliah at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans who were found there, the men of war.

3 Ishmael also struck down all the Judeans who were with him (that is, with Gedaliah) at Mizpah, along with the Chaldean soldiers who were found there.

3 Ishmael also slew all the Jews that were with him, even with Gedaliah, at Mizpah, and the Chaldeans that were found there, *and* the men of war.

- The whole administration of the land was at Mizpah. There was apparently some Babylonians, administrators of various kinds. They are obviously Gedaliah's staff, and also some men of war. They are all slaughtered by Ishmael and these ten guys, they were obviously skilled.

- They are devious, conspiratorial, but also skilled, they knocked this all off in such a way that they are going to try to keep it a secret for a while. They slaughtered everyone involved.

(c) Ongoing abuses (41:4-10)

4 Now it happened on the next day after the killing of Gedaliah, when no one knew *about it*,

4 Now it happened on the next day after the killing of Gedaliah, when no one knew about it,

4 Now on the day after Gedaliah was killed, when as yet no one knew about it,

4 And it came to pass the second day after he had slain Gedaliah, and no man knew it,

- This whole thing was kept secret, there were no witnesses, they didn't take any prisoners

5 that eighty men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria with their beards shaved off, their clothes torn, and their bodies gashed, having grain offerings and incense in their hands to bring to the house of the LORD.

5 that eighty men came from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria with their beards shaved off and their clothes torn and their bodies gashed, having grain offerings and incense in their hands to bring to the house of the LORD.

5 eighty men from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria came with their beards shaved, their clothes torn, and their bodies slashed. They had grain offerings and incense with them to present at the LORD's Temple.

5 That there came certain from Shechem, from Shiloh, and from Samaria, even fourscore men, having their beards shaven, and their clothes rent, and having cut themselves, with offerings and incense in their hand, to bring *them* to the house of the LORD.

These people are from an area that is today called Nablus. This is a very dangerous place to go today, for not very different reasons. It is interesting how history continues.

There were 80 men, by the way all but 10 of them are going to get slaughtered by these 11 guys. The 10 were taken prisoners because they got greedy; they figured they had stashed some food in a cistern and so they kept ten as hostages. A couple of things that are complicated: Josiah had thrown down all the altars of the idols up north. These particular guys are a strange mix of things. On the one hand they have come here to offer, to worship, so they are faithful at least in some sense of direction and yet they also evidence heathen manners. The fact that they have shaven beards is inappropriate, ceremonially rent clothes was prohibited in the Torah, and they also had ceremonial gashes. This is also a pagan rite that is associated normally with Baal worship. They had a style of cutting themselves ceremonially as a mechanism of expression (prohibited in Deut 14:1). Some evidence of this at Mount Carmel with Elijah.

This may be confusing at first, because they are victims of that cultural background, this doesn't necessarily mean that they are unbelievers. There is a lot of debate about exactly who they were and why and such. These 80 guys come to Mizpah, which was sort of the current administrative capital, to offer offerings.

They are at least in some sense believers; they are not idol worshipers except having this penalty of tradition with them.

6 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah left Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went; and as he met them, he said to them, "Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!"

6 Then Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went out from Mizpah to meet them, weeping as he went; and as he met them, he said to them, "Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam!"

6 Nethaniah's son Ishmael went out from Mizpah to meet them, crying as he went. As he met them he told them, "Come meet with Ahikam's son Gedaliah."

6 And Ishmael the son of Nethaniah went forth from Mizpah to meet them, weeping all along as he went: and it came to pass, as he met them, he said unto them, Come to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam.

7 Yet it turned out that as soon as they came inside the city, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the men who were with him slaughtered them *and threw them* into the cistern.

7 Yet it turned out that as soon as they came inside the city, Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and the men that were with him slaughtered them *and cast them* into the cistern.

7 When they reached the middle of the city, Nethaniah's son Ishmael and the men who were with him slaughtered them and threw them into a cistern.

7 And it was so, when they came into the midst of the city, that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah slew them, *and cast them* into the midst of the pit, he, and the men that were with him.

The pit built some 400 years earlier, a very famous cistern (1 Kings 15:22; 2 Chr 16:6) and that is where he threw all these bodies. This was stupid, the bodies pollute the water system to Mizpah, it was a cistern. It was a convenient place to cover up the slaughter. When these eighty show up we don't know if it is the eighty plus their entourage, in any case this group comes and they go out to meet them and through deviousness and subterfuge let them think every thing is great, weeping, and brings them into town for an ambush. He slaughters all but ten. It has been traditional in groups like that to leave the victuals in cisterns and fields on the way for the trip back or whatever. Bear in mind that this land has been famine ridden so food is a nontrivial resource. The presumption that seems to underline the story is that there was either information or a presumption that these people had placed provisions along the way typically hidden them in cisterns for their route back home. They don't slaughter all eighty; they keep ten for hostages. Then they torture them to find out where there is more food hidden.

8 But ten men who were found among them said to Ishmael, "Do not put us to death, for we have supplies of wheat, barley, oil, and honey hidden in the field." So he refrained and did not put them to death along with their companions.

8 But ten men who were found among them said to Ishmael, "Do not put us to death; for we have stores of wheat, barley, oil and honey hidden in the field." So he refrained and did not put them to death along with their companions.

8 Ten men who were among them told Ishmael, "Don't kill us, because we have stores of wheat, barley, oil, and honey hidden in the field." So Ishmael stopped and did not kill them or their companions.

8 But ten men were found among them that said unto Ishmael, Slay us not: for we have treasures in the field, of wheat, and of barley, and of oil, and of honey. So he forbore, and slew them not among their brethren.

9 Now as for the cistern where Ishmael had thrown all the bodies of the men whom he had struck and killed because of Gedaliah, it was the one that King Asa had constructed on account of Baasha, king of Israel; Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with the dead.

9 Now as for the cistern where Ishmael had cast all the corpses of the men whom he had struck down because of Gedaliah, it was the one that King Asa had made on account of Baasha, king of Israel; Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with the slain.

9 Ishmael threw the bodies of the men he killed on account of Gedaliah into the cistern that King Asa had made for protection against King Baasha of Israel. That is the same one Nethaniah's son Ishmael filled with those he killed.

9 Now the pit wherein Ishmael had cast all the dead bodies of the men, whom he had slain because of Gedaliah, was it which Asa the king had made for fear of Baasha king of Israel: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah filled it with *them that* were slain.

10 Then Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people who were in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people who were left in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard had put in the custody of Gedaliah the son of Ahikam. Ishmael the son of Nethaniah took them captive and proceeded to cross over to the sons of Ammon.

10 Then Ishmael took captive all the remnant of the people who were in Mizpah, the king's daughters and all the people who were left in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the bodyguard had put under the charge of Gedaliah the son of Ahikam; thus Ishmael the son of Nethaniah took them captive and proceeded to cross over to the sons of Ammon.

10 Then Ishmael took captive all the rest of the people who were in Mizpah, including the king's daughters and all the rest of the people in Mizpah over whom Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had appointed Ahikam's son Gedaliah. Nethaniah's son Ishmael took them captive and then set out to cross over to the Ammonites.

10 Then Ishmael carried away captive all the residue of the people that were in Mizpah, even the king's daughters, and all the people that remained in Mizpah, whom Nebuzaradan

the captain of the guard had committed to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam: and Ishmael the son of Nethaniah carried them away captive, and departed to go over to the Ammonites.

Ishmael is very much the pawn or the cat's paw if you will of King Baalis of the Ammonites. He promised that he would kill Gedaliah which he did. There is some debate over when this exactly occurs. Some think it is no longer than three months after the fall of Jerusalem. Other scholars think that it is several years later. There is evidence both ways.

Needless to say, Johanan who is a guerilla leader of sorts isn't too pleased by all of this. He was obviously frustrated that Gedaliah didn't listen; he tried to warn him twice at least, and it didn't do any good.

- (c) Johanan's leadership (41:11—42:22)
  - (i) Captives liberated (41:11-18)

**11** But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him heard about all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done.

**11** But Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done.

**11** Kareah's son Jonathan and all the military leaders who were with him heard about all the terrible things that Nethaniah's son Ishmael had done.

**11** But when Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, heard of all the evil that Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had done,

**12** So they took all the men and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and they found him by the large pool that is in Gibeon.

**12** So they took all the men and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah and they found him by the great pool that is in Gibeon.

**12** So they took all the men and went to fight Nethaniah's son Ishmael, and they found him at the large pool that is at Gibeon.

**12** Then they took all the men, and went to fight with Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, and found him by the great waters that are in Gibeon.

The city of Gibeon shows up in Joshua 18:25; 21:17 and several other places. It was a city in the tribe of Benjamin and it is about a mile from Mizpah. This is a familiar name; Gibeon is where Joab and Abner contend (2 Sam 2:12-17). This is where Joshua and his men had a victory over the allied groups of the Canaanites in defiance of the men of Gibeon. All through this there is deep history and irony, the ultimate irony is for them to return to Egypt which is coming in a couple more chapters.

13 Now as soon as all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him, they were joyful.

13 Now as soon as all the people who were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah and the commanders of the forces that were with him, they were glad.

13 When all the people who were with Ishmael saw Kareah's son Jonathan and all the military leaders who were with him, they were glad.

13 Now it came to pass, *that* when all the people which were with Ishmael saw Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, then they were glad.

- Sort of a strange reaction, and it seems that the people weren't too impressed with Ishmael. They are glad to see Johanan and the men.

14 So all the people whom Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to Johanan the son of Kareah.

14 So all the people whom Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah turned around and came back, and went to Johanan the son of Kareah.

14 All the people whom Ishmael had taken captive from Mizpah turned around and went back to Kareah's son Jonathan.

14 So all the people that Ishmael had carried away captive from Mizpah cast about and returned, and went unto Johanan the son of Kareah.

- Ishmael is a formidable force, and he is taking slaves and so when Johanan shows up there is obviously a following that he can take advantage of.

15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the sons of Ammon.

15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men and went to the sons of Ammon.

15 But Nethaniah's son Ishmael and eight other men escaped from Jonathan and went to the Ammonites.

15 But Ishmael the son of Nethaniah escaped from Johanan with eight men, and went to the Ammonites.

16 Then Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him took from Mizpah all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, after he had struck and killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, *that is*, the men who were soldiers, *the* women, *the* children, and *the* high officials, whom he had brought back from Gibeon.

**16** Then Johanan the son of Kareah and all the commanders of the forces that were with him took from Mizpah all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, after he had struck down Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, *that is*, the men who were soldiers, *the women, the children, and the eunuchs*, whom he had brought back from Gibeon.

**16** Kareah's son Jonathan and all the military leaders who were with him took all the rest of the people from Mizpah whom he had rescued from Nethaniah's son Ishmael after he had killed Ahikam's son Gedaliah, including the young men, the soldiers, women, children, and eunuchs whom he had rescued from Gibeon.

**16** Then took Johanan the son of Kareah, and all the captains of the forces that were with him, all the remnant of the people whom he had recovered from Ishmael the son of Nethaniah, from Mizpah, after *that* he had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, even mighty men of war, and the women, and the children, and the eunuchs, whom he had brought again from Gibeon:

17 And they went and stayed in Geruth Chimham, which is beside Bethlehem, in order to proceed into Egypt

17 And they went and stayed in Geruth Chimham, which is beside Bethlehem, in order to proceed into Egypt

17 They traveled and then stopped at Geruth Chimham near Bethlehem on their way to Egypt

17 And they departed, and dwelt in the habitation of Chimham, which is by Bethlehem, to go to enter into Egypt,

- Chimham is not far from Bethlehem and is on the route to Egypt. Therefore, fears wrath of Chaldeans.

18 because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, since Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had struck and killed Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

18 because of the Chaldeans; for they were afraid of them, since Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had struck down Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

18 because of the Chaldeans. They were afraid of the Chaldeans<sup>8</sup> because Nethaniah's son Ishmael had killed Ahikam's son Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed over the land.

18 Because of the Chaldeans: for they were afraid of them, because Ishmael the son of Nethaniah had slain Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, whom the king of Babylon made governor in the land.

- The book of Jeremiah is piece-mealed. These insertions, whether by Baruch or whatever keep repackaging the context.
  - All the commentators have a problem with the fragmentary nature of the styling. In this case, there is no chronological problem because it is all-continuous. There is a repeating of context as if they are pieced together.